

Mexico by Motorcycle ... in 1981

**By BMW Motorcycle in 1981
By Google Streetview in 2014**



Derrick King

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*Front: Looking for Route 2 near Nuevo Casas Grandes, Chihuahua
Back: Carretera Transpeninsular, Guerrero Negro, Baja Calif. Sur*

To Mexico! To Mexico!
Down the dovegrey highway,
past Atomic City police,
past the firey border to dream cantinas!
—Allen Ginsberg

Mexico by Motorcycle ... in 1981

Contents

Introduction	1
Riding to Mexico	5
Carretera Transpeninsular	10
Vizcaino Desert	12
Guerrero Negro	16
Ride to Santa Rosalia	18
Santa Rosalia	20
Overnight Ferry to Guaymas	22
Guaymas	23
Los Mochis and Topolobampo	29
Mazatlan	31
Puerto Vallarta	36
Ride to Guadalajara	38
Guadalajara	41
Guanajuato	48
Aguascalientes	58
Fresnillo	59
Durango	60
Ride to Juarez	62
Juarez	65
Riding Home	67
Looking Back	70
Appendix	72
Adventure Riders' Comments	78

Introduction

Bikers in 2014 might chuckle at some photos of touring in Mexico thirty years ago pre-GPS (we had paper maps), pre-cellphone (we put coins in phone booths), pre-Internet (we used the public library), pre-Lonely Planet (we used the South American Handbook and the People's Guide to Mexico), pre-Facebook (we sent postcards), pre-ATM (we used traveler's cheques), and pre-digicam (we used Ektachrome 200).

For this story I looked up, where possible, the same location today in Google Streetview and provided "before-and-after" photos. It was a challenge to work out the geographic coordinates of places I visited 32 years ago only from the visual clues, but it was an addictive puzzle once started.

In 1979 Ted Simon published *Jupiter's Travels* and I had just read it. In 1980 the Mexican Baja highway had only been open for a few years. By 1981 my 1974 motorbike had taken me to every Canadian province, territory, and US state (except Hawaii) so it was time for something more adventurous on it. Mexico beckoned. The August-September ride was about three weeks because as a new graduate I had only three weeks vacation entitlement. That required 325 miles / 525 km of riding per day.

At 65,000 miles (106,000 km) I never thought that I was riding a "high-mileage" bike. I rode my self-maintained BMW 100,000 miles before it was wrecked by a deer strike and it never once left me stranded, although it suffered a few non-critical or roadside-repairable failures. The parts wore out in predictable ways and was not difficult to do all the maintenance myself to save money. When it did break down, I knew how to repair it.

The camera that was used to take all the pictures was a Minox 35EL, which came out the same year as the bike and was the world's smallest full-frame 35mm film camera—the ultimate touring biker camera of its day:



Mexico by Motorcycle ... in 1981

Andy Warhol used one and the Russians soon cloned it, calling it the Kiev. It was half the size and weight of the digital camera which I now use, but had no zoom, antishake, autofocus, rangefinder, or built-in flash—and it cost about a dollar a shot to shoot. It did have a light meter, but if the subject was back-lit, the images were underexposed. Thanks to Photoshop, I was able to correct this three decades later and bring the photos to life.

The route, about 11,000 kilometers, the thick red line:



The black lines are other trips made on the same bike before and after this trip, drawn on this paper map decades ago.

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The equipment:



The 1974 BMW R75/6 carried nearly its own weight in accessories, riders (two at that time), and equipment. It worked hard! In the red bags are Eddie Bauer goose down sleeping bags, ThermoRest self-inflating air mattresses, and a Sears tent. The camping equipment was used in the USA, but not in Mexico. It was too hot, dusty, or unsafe to camp in the open.

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The navigation system:



The entire trip was planned on photocopied map segments, which were pulled out one by one. The main problem with paper maps was navigating inside and out of big cities, such as Guadalajara. The starting mileage on the bike visible on the odometer: 65,454 miles (106,000 km).

Riding to Mexico

Oregon coast:



The small antenna in front of the red bag was part of my homemade wireless security system. This silent alarm went off again and again when children tried to climb on the bike in Mexico. It worked, but a simple bike cover would have been more effective.

Mexican farm workers harvesting the crop at dawn near Castroville, California:



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Bixby Bridge, Pacific Coast Highway #1 near Big Sur:



Near San Luis Obispo:



No one would do a trip like this in denim and an open-face helmet today, but that was considered normal hot-weather riding gear a generation ago.

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Los Angeles, my first time to ride under palm trees:



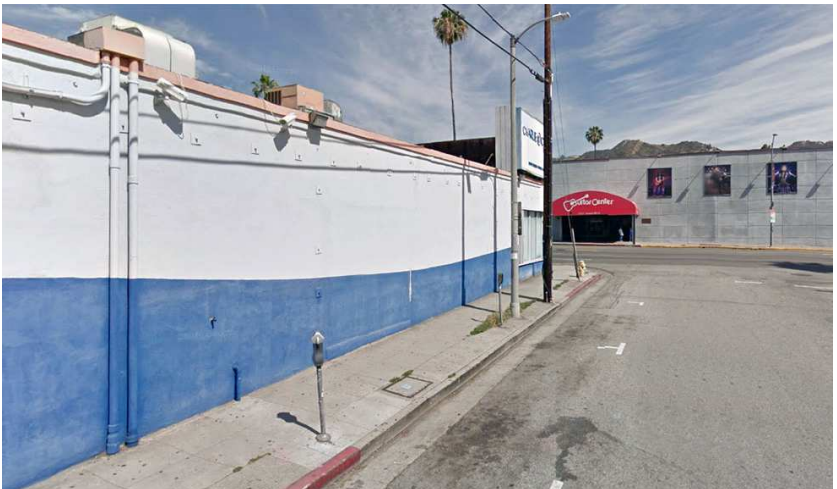
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Hollywood, at the corner of Vista and Sunset Boulevard:



Moviemaking on the street. Note the 1981 Julie Andrews and Alan Alda movies on the billboard of the Oriental Theater in the background.

The view from the same spot in 2014 on Google Streetview:



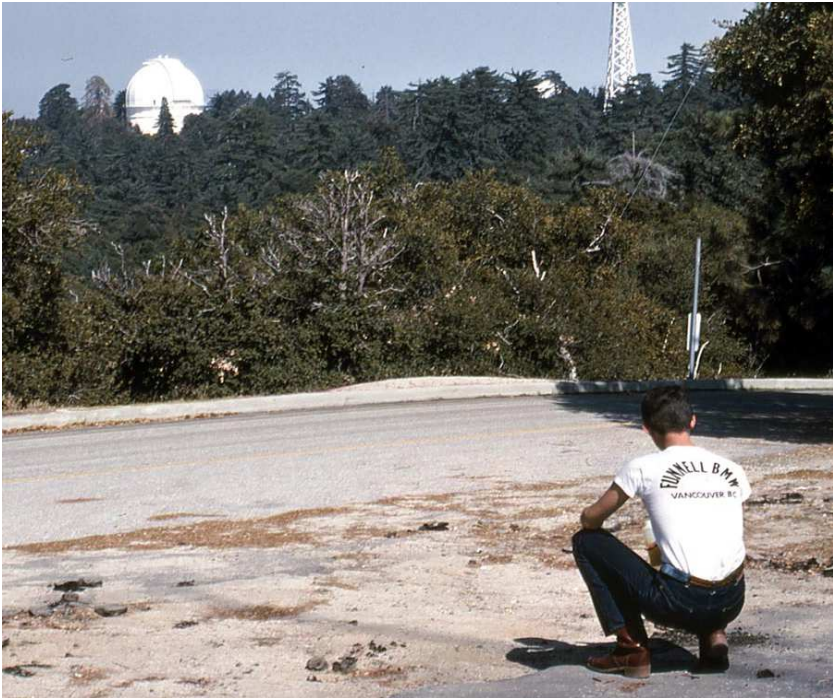
The theater is gone, replaced by a guitar center in a new building. Hollywood's Oriental Theatre on Sunset Boulevard closed in 1985 after 64 years in business; it had been built and opened in 1921.

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Universal Studios:



Mount Palomar Observatory:



Funnell BMW was the largest BMW bike dealer in Canada. See Appendix.

Carretera Transpeninsular

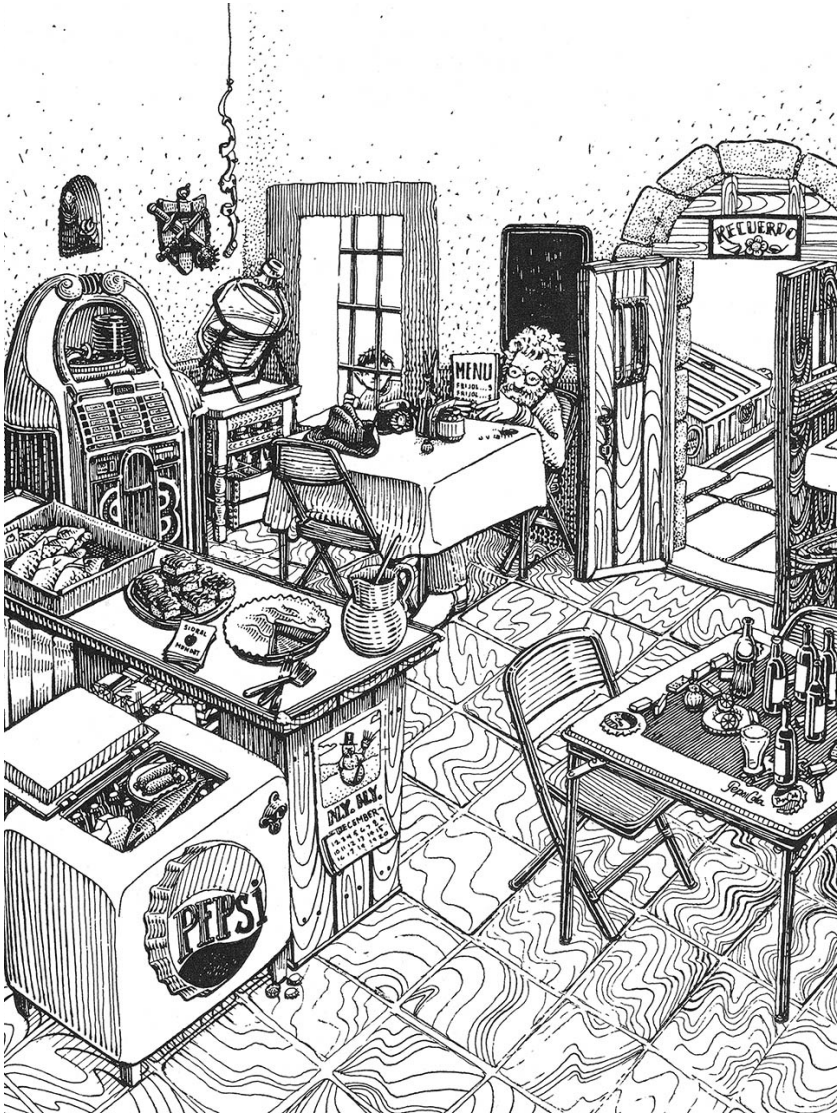
The Baja highway just after passing through Tijuana:



Almost no traffic. Wonderful. It was my first ride outside North America and it felt like high adventure.

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I don't have a photo of the inside of a Baja cafe, but I do have permission to use this superb drawing ©1979 by *People's Guide To Mexico*:



This is exactly what roadside eateries were like ... and hot! No TV on the wall, no muzak; drop a coin in the Wurlitzer.

Vizcaino Desert



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It was HOT:



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Mexico by Motorcycle ... in 1981



The left valve cover started to seep oil through a crack, so I wrapped a white rag around it, visible above. This solved the problem for the rest of the trip.

Guerrero Negro

Sea salt factory:



Guerrero Negro motel:



It was so windy during the afternoon that the bike system set off the motion alarm several times, despite the bike being in the motel courtyard.

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The Baja morning was surprisingly cold and foggy, but only for an hour:



Desert soldiers:



Ride to Santa Rosalia



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Microondas Los Angeles (a microwave relay station in the Baja) in 1981:



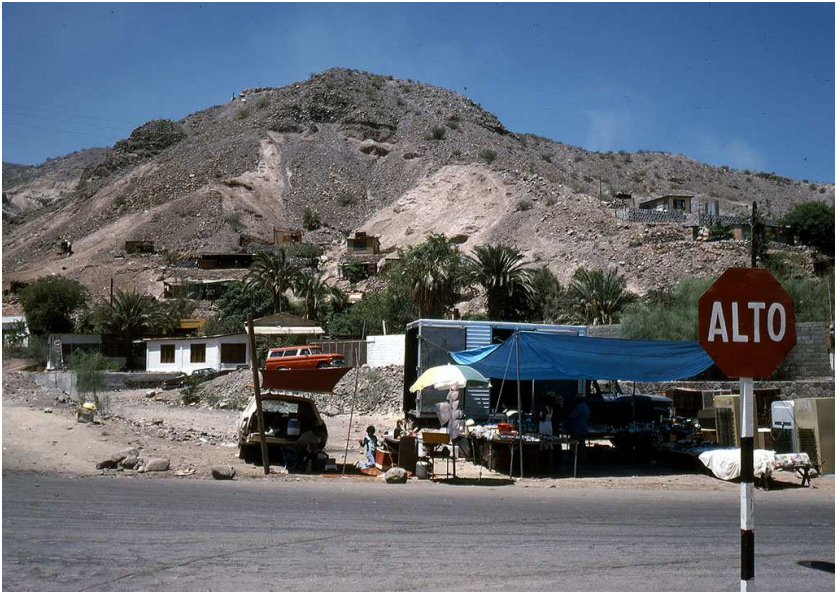
The site is still there in 2014 in Google Streetview:



You meet interesting folks in the desert, when you meet anyone at all.



Santa Rosalia



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Overnight Ferry to Guaymas

The ferry station in 1981:



And in 2014 in Google Streetview:



The gravel, cactus, and pickups have been replaced by asphalt and sedans.

Mexico by Motorcycle ... in 1981

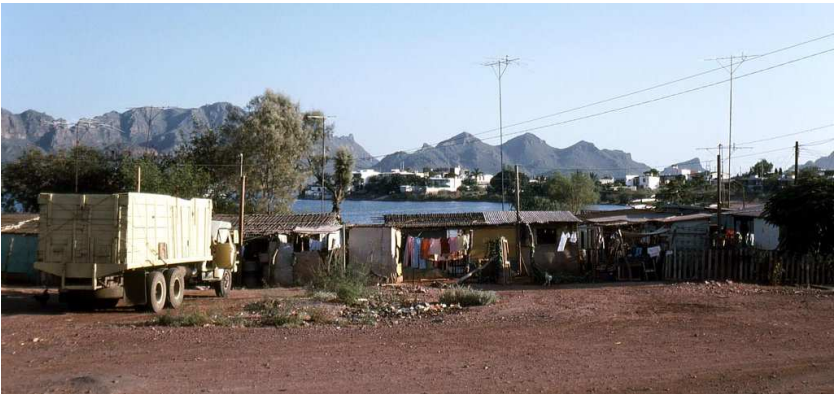
I took the overnight ferry. I slept on deck next to the people in the photo below, and by morning we were all streaked with tar and oily soot. Before heading off in the morning I rinsed my face and hands with gasoline.



Guaymas



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Mexico by Motorcycle ... in 1981



Mexico by Motorcycle ... in 1981

This *hombre* knows he is cool:



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Cine Diana, Guaymas in 1981:



And the same street on Google Earth in 2014:



The Cine Diana movie theater at the corner of Aquiles Serdan and Calle 19 closed and was replaced by a bank. Las Mil Tortas is still in business but it has moved a block down the street.

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Pantalones Norteño in 1981:



And in 2014:



Pantalones Norteño (“Primary And Secondary School Uniforms” and “The Finest Pants In The Region”) is still there next to the Mercado Municipal. The Ferretería Nueva hardware store that was next to it has been replaced by a second-hand shop.

Los Mochis and Topolobampo

Roadside grave:



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Mazatlan

Elota Junction on the way to Mazatlan. There are party-line telephone wires on poles on the left:



And in 2014—modern:



The junction has a better sign and the highway has been upgraded and widened. The signposting to Tecuyo has been removed. No doubt the telephone system has been improved as well.

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Mazatlan's Mercado Pino Suarez in 1981:



And in 2014:



The Mercado Pino Suarez public market seems much the same, including the juice bar on the corner, but the other shops have changed and the Hotel Teresa in the background is gone.

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Inside the Suarez public market:



Mexico by Motorcycle ... in 1981



Mexico by Motorcycle ... in 1981

Smashing a piñata:



Sunset at Mazatlan, shot from the seat of the motorcycle:



Puerto Vallarta



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The corner of Juarez and Libertad in 1981:



And in 2014 in Google Earth:



The saplings have grown into small trees. The corner still has a tourist shop and the street has been paved.

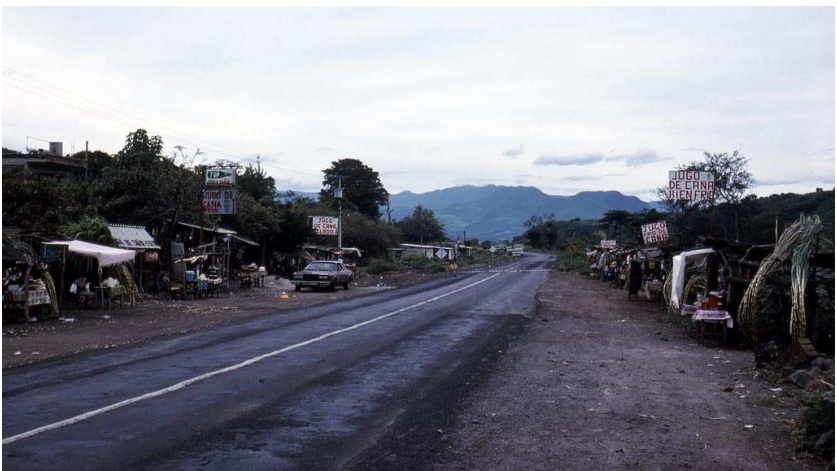
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My Puerto Vallarta hotel:



The ceiling fan was so low the steel blades nearly chopped off my fingers. They were bleeding after I reached up while removing my T-shirt.

Ride to Guadalajara



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Mexico by Motorcycle ... in 1981



An *agave azul* farm next to the town of Tequila:



Guadalajara



Mexico by Motorcycle ... in 1981



The Mercado San Juan de Dios:



Mexico by Motorcycle ... in 1981

Watermelon on the street:



The three girls are dressed very nicely. Perhaps it was a Sunday and they are coming home from the cathedral in the next photo.

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Mexico by Motorcycle ... in 1981

A *charrería*, a Mexican rodeo:



Throttle cable failure, replacing it with a spare in the tropical heat:



I carried essential spare parts. The only other mechanical problem on the trip was a stuck float bowl valve that soaked a boot in fuel until I removed and cleaned it by the roadside. In those days, BMW was still justly famed as the most reliable motorcycle in the world. This is no longer so: the Japanese brands have long surpassed BMW for reliability and, of course, for the number of parts and service centers internationally which can provide support on the road.

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University of Guadalajara, with the 1970s-era cars parked in front:



And in 2014. The parking lot has been given over to pedestrians:



Mexico by Motorcycle ... in 1981

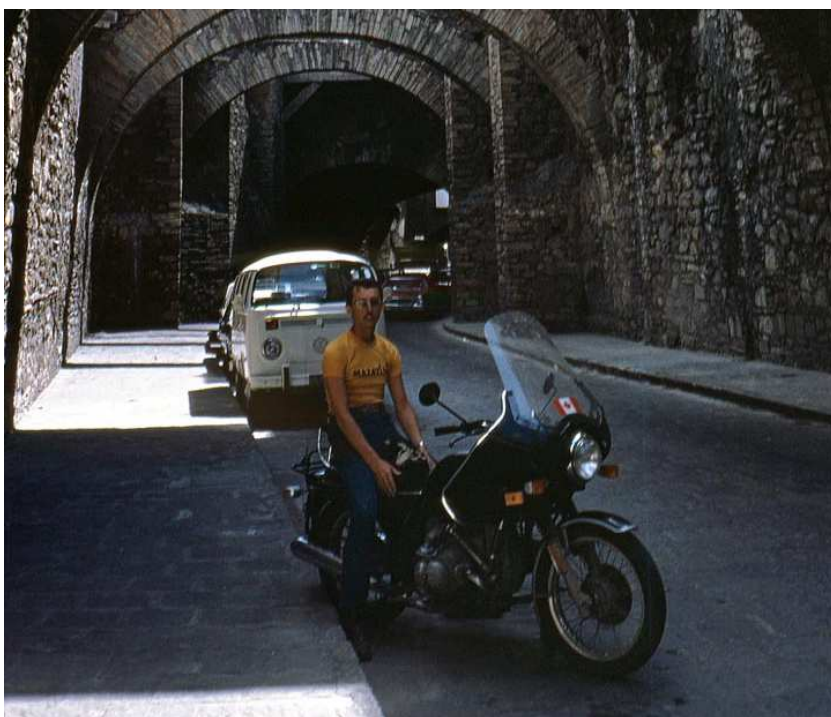
Predict your future with an Atari computer:

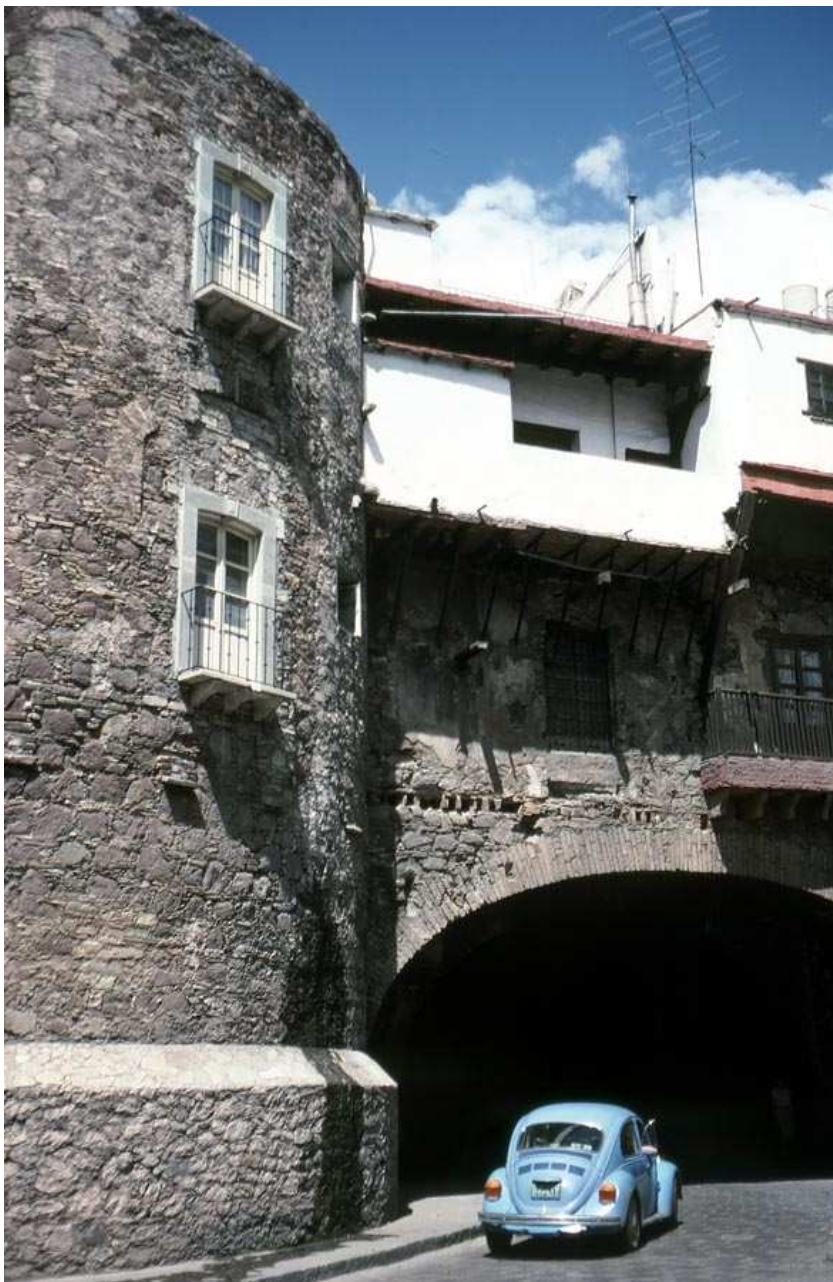


Guanajuato



It was HOT—I felt I was melting in the heat:





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Hacienda de Cobos Hotel:



Mexico by Motorcycle ... in 1981

Tortilla maker ... it's HOT in there:



Mexico by Motorcycle ... in 1981

And outside the tortilla-maker's shop on Guanajuato Av. Juarez, with the Mercado Hidalgo in the background:



Compare with 2014:



It looks so run down now compared to its charm before. The old businesses are gone, including the tortilla factory.

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Streetside chicken grill:



Mexican food is good—no wonder it is now found all over the world.

Mexico by Motorcycle ... in 1981

Guanajuato's Mercado Hidalgo in 1981:



And in 2014:



The area around the Mercado Hidalgo market has a different feel to it (why hide such a lovely building behind a tall hedge?) but the market hall—over 100 years old—is still the same.

Mexico by Motorcycle ... in 1981

Inside the Mercado Hidalgo in 1981:



And not far away:



Mexico by Motorcycle ... in 1981

Volkswagen was still producing Beetles in 1981:



The last Volkswagen Beetle manufactured anywhere in the world rolled off a Mexican assembly line in 2003.

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Guanajuato is a pleasant university town:



But on the other side of the tracks:



Aguascalientes



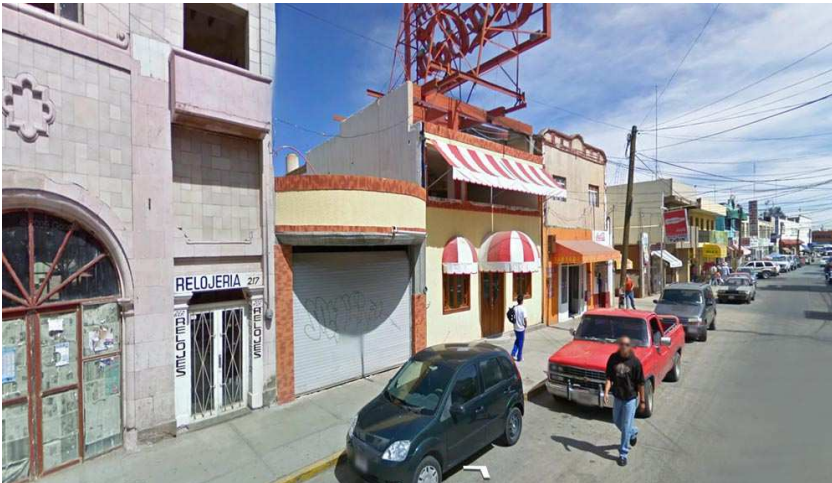
Fresnillo

Fresnillo in 1981:



Note the preponderance of pickup trucks.

And the same spot in 2014, from Google Streetview:



Note the preponderance of small cars. Only the Relojeria (jewelry shop) behind my motorcycle in the 1981 photo seems still to be in business in the same location.

Durango

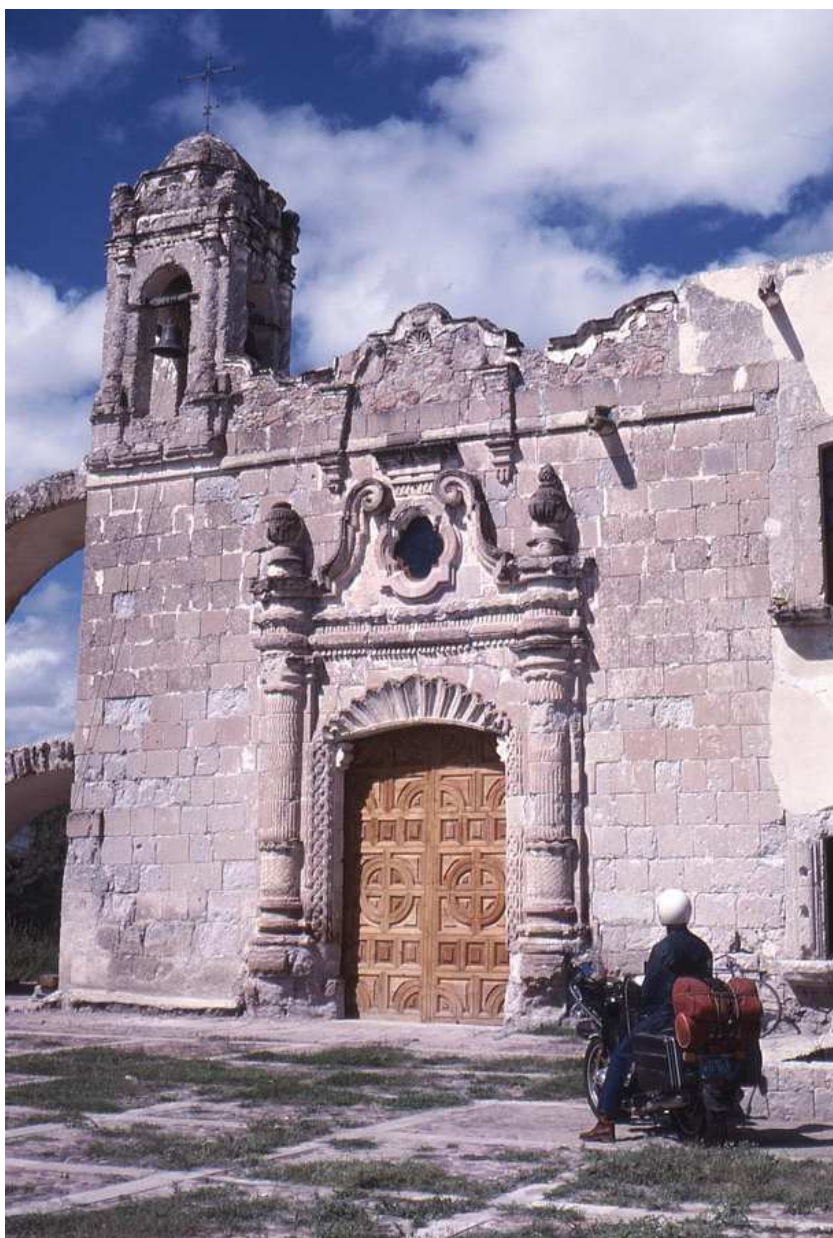


Plaza de Toros Alejandra in Durango in 1981:



And the bull ring in 2014. A subdivision has been built behind it:





Ride to Juarez



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70,000 miles (113,000 km) on the odometer, highway 45 south of Juarez:



Mexico by Motorcycle ... in 1981

One horsepower:



Two horsepower:



Fifty horsepower ... navigating with the paper maps ... lost again:



Juarez

Child cigarette vendors opposite Juarez cathedral near the border crossing:



Mexico by Motorcycle ... in 1981



In the photo below the plastic bubble mounted over the headlight to protect it from flying rocks is visible.



Mexico by Motorcycle ... in 1981

The border guard above at Juarez was very friendly. He posed for me because he wanted me to mail him a copy of the photo when I got home. He wrote his address on a slip of paper and I put it in my passport, but I lost it and never sent it to him. Sorry

Riding Home

It was good to be back in the USA and be camping again:



Mexico by Motorcycle ... in 1981

Santa Fe:



Near Carlsbad:



The great motorcycling mountains of Colorado:



Mexico by Motorcycle ... in 1981

Morning in Idaho:



Mexico by Motorcycle ... in 1981

It was nearly freezing in the morning. The bike cranked very slowly and would not start: I had filled the engine with straight SAE 40W oil to protect it during hot desert riding; it was too viscous at low temperatures. Even the kick-starter couldn't get the bike going. So I put my campstove under the motorcycle, heated the engine's oil pan for half an hour, then used jumper cables belonging to a pickup truck owner to start it. I switched to multigrade SAE 20W-50 oil after that!

Looking Back



The trip consumed one front tire, two rear tires, and three oil changes, all do-it-yourself in motel rooms (the tires) or at the roadside (oil changes).

When I showed the photos to my friend in Vancouver it inspired him to ride to Mexico the following year on his BMW R60/5. On that ride he met a Mexicana; they became penpals. My second ride to Mexico was in 1984 to witness and photograph their wedding in Tepic.

Thirty years later they are still married ... and he still has the R60/5.

Mexico by Motorcycle ... in 1981

In 1990 Mexico moved from the *South American Handbook* (where it had been for 66 years) and into a new *Mexico and Central America Handbook* along with Guatemala, Belize, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama. In 1994 Mexico joined Canada and the USA in the *North America Free Trade Agreement*. So from 1990 to 1994 Mexico migrated northwards from *South* to *Central* to *North* America.

Four years after my trip McDonalds came to Mexico, followed by Wal-Mart in 1991. Kentucky Fried Chicken crossed the border in 1963. Tortillas, huaraches, and *frenos* are cheaper now, but the changes in Mexico have not been pretty for small retailers, tourists, and Mexican waistlines.

If only I had had more money and time in my twenties, and more youth to go with my post-retirement money and time in my fifties. Because of scarce vacation days I was always in a hurry, and this is my regret when I think of motorcycle touring in my youth—so little time and so little money.

When I rode back to Mexico in 1984 to my friend's wedding and on to Guatemala and Belize, I was so rushed to jam the trip into four weeks vacation at 350 miles / 571 km per day that I only shot less than one roll of film; that fantastic five-country trip survives only in my memory. Just three photos survive. This is one of them—Palenque in Chiapas:



Appendix

BMW Dealer Philip Funnell

Dealer Phil Funnell who sold me the 1974 BMW I rode to Mexico:

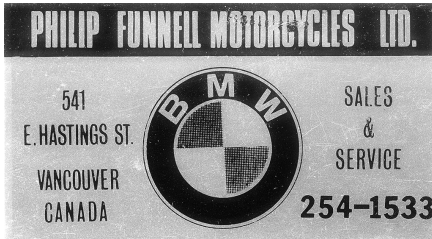


In this 1973 photo taken with a Kodak Instamatic and a Flashcube there is a new 1972 R75 next to Phil, and an *On Any Sunday* (1971, with Steve

Mexico by Motorcycle ... in 1981

McQueen) poster behind him. Phil located this shop near decades-old Pacific Cycle, which had employed Phil before he quit over their customer practices. Soon afterward they lost their BMW distributorship but continued to sell Honda and Vespa until they closed in the mid-1980s.

What happened to Funnell BMW? In the late 1970s Phil sold his business, bought a sailboat, and went single-handed sailing around the world. In



1981 interest rates went over 22% and the new owners were hurt by the financial crisis like other business owners who had to finance inventory. Funnell BMW went bust. The going-out-of-business sale in 1983 was like a wake; there would be no more

coffee with other touring enthusiasts on Saturday mornings. Phil, a hero to younger riders, developed enthusiasts, also as a BMWMOA Ambassador.

Here is another photo of the shop in "the good old days" in 1976 with Phil; Pokie, the master mechanic now in Colorado; and Shail, another great mechanic who became a Vancouver BMW dealer himself.



BMW Motorcycle Fate

My 1974 BMW R75/6 motorcycle was knocked down the side of a British Columbia mountain by a deer in September, 1988 and destroyed.

It was a perfect, sunny, cold traffic-free morning at 8 am in the Kootenay mountains. The odometer had just turned over 100,000 miles, all of them mine. The bike had still never been back inside the shop since the day I took it in for the free 600 mile service in 1975.

On one of the few straight stretches of highway a deer bolted down the 45 degree slope on the left and hit the left pannier when I was doing 60mph. It hit the bike so hard it knocked it out from under me and down the 45 degree slope on the right. Amazingly, I did not hit the deer and I eventually slid to a stop on the highway.

The bike was wrecked and the accessories were torn off but I was uninjured. It was a miracle. I just stood up, with my leathers and helmet covered in scratches and the belt buckle ground off. The bike and deer were nowhere to be seen.

A passing pickup truck stopped, wondering what a motorcyclist in full leathers and helmet was doing standing in the middle of an empty highway. The driver gave me a lift to the police station in the nearest town. I returned in the police car to the accident scene where we found the deer lying with blood coming out of its nose.

The police (RCMP arranged for the tow truck in the photo below and for the removal of the dying deer.



This freak bolt-from-the-blue accident spooked me so much I sold the wrecked bike and I stopped touring for twenty years.

The Airhead Wheel Balancer

The Airhead Wheel Balancer idea came from Phil Funnell, but I replaced his punched metal plates and stainless steel bolts with key rings. No tools other than a pocketknife were needed to make it from four ball bearings, six key rings, some nylon rope, and a few cable ties. It fit in the palm of my hand, and resided in the toolbox under the seat along with a handful of balancing weights. I used this device every time I changed tires—three times on the Mexican trip alone. Tires did not last long in the 1970s and 1980s and at least one would wear out during a long trip.



To balance a tire I hung the balancer over a tree branch or a motel shower rod. I put the axle through the wheel and rested it on each pair of bearings so it rotated freely, with the heavy side of the tire eventually coming to rest at the bottom. I put a balancing weight on the top and repeated the procedure several times until the wheel came to rest in no favored position.

Mexico by Motorcycle ... in 1981

In 1970s and 1980s, motorcycle parts were significantly cheaper in the USA than in Canada, so when it was time to replace the tires my friends and I would leave home with worn-out tires and stop at a motorcycle shop south of the border. A 1983 photo of a friend and I about to use it:



The Airhead Wheel Balancer is sitting in the toolbox on the lower left.

Mexican 1980s Financial Crisis Joke

The 1980s financial crisis that killed Funnell BMW also wrecked the peso, which crashed after years of stability from \$0.40 in 1980 to \$0.07 in 1983. A joke I saw in rural Mexico went like this. Mexico City takes our peso:



Then they cut its value in half (fold the banknote in half):



And they cut it in half again (fold the banknote in half again):



And cut it again (fold it again)! So today this is all our money is worth:



Adventure Riders' Comments

I previously uploaded parts of this story to *Horizons Unlimited* and *Adventure Rider* website journals, receiving over 25,000 views. Here are excerpts from the posted replies:

Terrific photos and story!

BRClarke

Very, very cool. Thanks for taking the time to post these classic photos and descriptions. I've been traveling Mexico for so long and this brought back fond memories. Interestingly enough ... not a lot has changed!

Danny Diego

Awesome report! Thank you for sharing this.

SportsGuy

Beautiful photos, images on real film. Mexico hasn't changed very much. Beautiful bike, the height of touring sophistication. Thanks!

Ricard

What a wonderful report! Looks like you had a great time, and you even got to meet Gandalf the Gray on the way to Rosalia! Bonus! Besides being a fine report in its own right, it also serves to remind us all that it is not really necessary to have all the 2014 gadgets in order to set out. Thanks!

Blader54

Thank you. That was great, thank you for taking the time to post this up. How come you've waited since the 80's to do it? Been too busy?

Willwilkins

That is a great report! From time to time some of these vintage reports come up on the forum and are so appreciated! I love them, thank you! Nic

Drlc8

Very cool ride report, and great pics!

Burque Magoo

Thanks for sharing all your pics and taking us on a trip into the glorious past! Ah... to be young and carefree again..

GB

Thanks for sharing. I lived in Mexico then and this brought back memories. Much has changed, and most not for the best. Great report.

GSAragazzi

Excellent. Love the bike. Love the year. Love the pics. I give it 11 stars. In 1982 I rode my Honda 250XL with my girlfriend on the back from San Antonio Texas to Mexico City. We had \$40 cash and stayed in 2 motels, were served alcohol (we were 16 and 17) and were told we would be paying off the cops when pulled over so be ready to shell out cash. We rode past many cops that

Mexico by Motorcycle ... in 1981

looked us up and down and I am certain determined we weren't worth the trouble. Man those were great times. Wish I'd had a camera then. *Patrkbukly*

Fantastic ride...32 years ago! *SR1*

Awesome trip. Things were a little different then: not many Pemex, i.e.; don't pass gas. Not much aircon, refrigerated food, ice, fresh vegetables, etc. We have to work at it to get that old flavor now. Thanks for posting. *Moto Vaquero*

Great pics and post ... many thanks. *VHVol*

Thanks for this timeless true perspective of this beautiful country *AZ Tom*

You brought back a lot of memories *Navigator*

Nothing has changed much *Ace Jones*

Thanks for taking the time to put your trip report together *OI Man*

OH the good old days, Less developed, traffic, pollution, and cost! I think I got my 1st bicycle in 1981 *Billigan*

Wow, just fantastic, thanks for taking what must have been a lot of time scanning old photos. That was the same year I took my first big trip, I was 24 and we rode from Atlanta to the Pacific and back, 6 weeks. *Skowinski*

I enjoyed that. Thank you very much. *Dickyb*

Fantastic! Thanks for the great report, loved it! *Mudclod*

Muchas gracias for that epic ride down memory lane ... loved all of it! *Shari*

Almost makes me want to pull out my pictures from 68. I was on my own bike. 12 years old. There was a guy in San Felipe we called "Sam the clam man". He would rent you a bucket and shovel, and we would dig clams. We rode from Cantimar to San Felipe and back. No roads. No bungee cords. No tents. Sleeping bags and a small change of clothes. No falta nada. *Oneway*

Simply awesome! Thanks for taking time to put this together. Loved it! *Ralphy199*

Mexico by Motorcycle ... in 1981

Thank so much for taking us along on your epic adventure. You must have taken time to scan those pictures into the computer (great job) You sir made my day. I still use a map, and only like my GPS in a large metropolis, and in Mexico that doesn't work well either . Funny looking at the pictures I don't see much difference today; architecturally speaking. I saw a Pinto in one of those shots, like seeing a dodo bird. Again Thanks, I enjoyed it. *Idahosam*

Extremely interesting collection of old time Mexico photo. Thanks! *Tricepilot*

Thanks so much for sharing such an interesting report! It's really cool as a young guy to see motorbike travels from when my dad was around the same age. Really enjoyed it! *Jkdwings*

Fantastic ride report! I counted no fewer than 15 air-cooled VW's in your photos. And an AMC Gremlin! Please send me the coordinates for the rusted-out VW bus so that I may go and recover it. *MufflerBearings*

This is likely the best First Post on AdvRider! Great ride report, great pictures, great era in time. *Poolman*

Great old pics. I gotta dig up my pics of Cabo from 1983. *MKJ*

Excellent ... but i thought these type of rides were only made after 2004 on the modern better stuff with all the high dollar suits and gizmos (I used moms garden gloves for protection back in the day as an example) ... i never went anywhere outside my own town until 2008 when i got a cellphone ... most excellent report ... love it. God speed *Snooter*

Amazing! I really like seeing places as they used to be. Can't wait for your new stuff. *Jfman*

Brought back memories of my 1973 trip. Thanks. Great photos! *Norton(kel)*

Awesome. Thanks for sharing. *Horseiron1*

Fantastic report! And how we obsess nowadays! -- Blue jeans, a pair of Fries, and a leather jacket from Sears; and that was pretty much the extent of a guy's riding 'wardrobe' back in the seventies! *Ikigai*

What a brilliant ride! It took me back in time to show me how good and how fun you guys had it back then... That was a motorcycle adventure in the purest sense! Thanks for sharing! EPIC! *keiPHadventure*

Mexico by Motorcycle ... in 1981

What a great story on that dealer within this RR. We could go off on a tangent and discuss what things were like in dealers back then (sawdust and machine clippings, grease on the floor and those glorious Honda CT70's/XL70's in colors you wanted to eat like topaz orange) ... but these sterile dealers we have today are just pathetic. Excellent, just excellent historical perspective ... bringing back a lot of memories. God speed.

Snooter

Thanks for sharing, you have some amazing photos.

Booger1

Thanks. Great report. Great pix.

Noshoes

Thanks so much for sharing..... The photos reminded me of my first ride down there in 1973,,,,,,, thanks!!!!!!

Flyingavanti

Thanks. Awesome pics. Love the old Vancouver m/c shop pic. Love the old Vancouver m/c shop pic. As an old air-head guy, did you ever cross paths with Lawrence Bird, from Brandon Manitoba?

Yamalama

Thanks a million for taking the time to share. I'm blown away by the quality of the pics

TemaculaRider

Outstanding ! Simply outstanding ! ... thank you for posting this. some streets and buildings in Mazatlan and Puerto Vallarta are still the same, or close to it ... I rode a CJ360T back then but only in BC ! Really enjoyed this.

hwunger

Simply wonderful. Thank you.

Rutabaga

Thanks for taking the time to create such a great historical document. Just plain excellent.

Whizzerwheel

Awesome! This is awesome. Thanks for sharing these amazing photos and your story. It's like a time capsule.

Johnny Locks

Great report with some great history brought back with your photos. Recognized a few places in your pics ... not the least of which was the Hotel Hacienda de Cobos in Guanajuato. I stayed in the room at the bottom left corner of your pic below. It hasn't changed much.

Rex Buck

Thanks! This is a fantastically engaging photo set. I really enjoyed it. Thanks for writing it up!

MacAfee

Great pics, great post. thanks for sharing.

B4thenite

Mexico by Motorcycle ... in 1981

Thanks for ride down memory lane. Regretfully, the old VW Bus no longer resides along Hwy 1 in Baja. It was always a great landmark on our way to San Francisquito and on to Tripui. *Prsdrat*

Thanks for sharing this trip and pictures, your photos have held up well. Most of us would never venture on a trip like that with a high mileage bike Inspirational. Truly an adventure! *Markaso del Norte*

Great photos, made me feel like I was watching one the old time travel shows on TV. Have never visited Mexico, so it's still a very foreign land to me, but definitely something to look forward to. My dad used to have the Kiev clone you mentioned, it was like magic to me as a kid. Developing and printing in our own bathroom, thank you for sparking that memory. *NonstopBanana*

Thank you. I love reports like this. I am going riding now and pretending i'm in Mexico. *Padmei*

Thank You! Man what an awesome trip!! Thank you for sharing, we really enjoyed the pictures. Cool bike too. *LostInmate*

Fabulous ride report. Thanks for putting it together for us. Great piece of history and well documented. I especially like the comparison photo Google Streetview Then and Now shots. Thanks for sharing a bit of history. *Watercat*

Thanks for the great nostalgia trip. As one who went there before 1981, I see much the same. I bet many of those pickups are still running! That Vallarta street is paved now. It is not the main street nowadays. One part of me thinks back and says not so long ago (I was 38 in 1981) and my lower back ha! says it is The "take the pics for the old man you will become" is so true. I find that in today's world there is zero interest (except RR's here!) in pics of past trips from others around me. It's just not like the old days when you took your film in or mailed it and everybody ganged around the prints excitedly. If I live to that point of rest home lethargy(as in don't die riding) I plan to have my MC and other trip pics at my bedside and reminisce! *Kantuckid*

Wow, Mexico was just as ugly 30 years ago as it is today. I guess being a kid I just didn't noticed how ugly it was ... I really can't understand why some Americans want to travel here. I'd really appreciate if an American explained what the appeal to ride through Mexico is. I just don't get it. Only thing I like about riding here is that I can ride at whatever speed I feel like, which is not usually very high due to our crappy roads. *Sussertod*

Mexico by Motorcycle ... in 1981

Hats off, trip down to memory lane. I noticed you did not have much luggage... Thank you for sharing history and showing how it was. *Malmon*

Amazing work with Google Streetview vs 1981. *Cy*

Great write-up! Brings back many old memories. *Pokie*

So awesome seeing "vintage" reports. Film still has a magic that digital can't capture. I love the border guard; looks like he belongs on the bike. *Jaratr*

Exceptional report! Amazing to see how things were before I was even born I envy you having experienced the times before we have become dependent on cell phones and the internet. Very cool comparison pictures! *EnderThex*

Thanks for posting. It's cool to see the "now" vs "then" comparisons. *Srad600*

Absolutely awesome. Thanks for taking the time to share your photos. *Gatling*

This It brings back great memories. There is nothing better than the sound of an airhead motor humming across the Mexican desert. Thirty years goes in a flash. I had the same Krauser bags. I knew it was time to head north when the right bag popped open in Guatemala. I wondered why the locals were waving wildly and yelling as I rode by. Lost my spare parts and feeler gauges along with my underwear. Had to adjust my valves with a folded peso note on the way home. I think it was a folded peso note for intake and three thicknesses for exhaust. Great stuff amigo. I give this report 5 stars. *John Downs*

Thanks for a fantastic report! That was an amazing look back. *PhillipsMetal*

Absolutely fantastic ride report, I really appreciate you sharing all this with us. I am struck by how much Mexico has not changed. My family traveled the length of the freshly created Highway 1 in 1973 from Tijuana to La Paz then across the bay on the ferry and back up the mainland in our Winnebago. I was 13 and can say that we had no idea what we were doing. My dad carried a pistol with us hidden in the stove exhaust pipe! *GreggWannabe*

Fantastic seeing your RR. Sure brings back memories of trips to the same places. Had my first BMW a 1969 R60/2 serviced by Phillip Funnel BMW in 1971 (great guys) just before taking it through the South Pacific. Your pictures remind me of Western Australia where the temperature was over 50C and the R60 would only run for a few minutes before the gas would boil and the bike would quit. I look forward to the rest of your ride reports! *burnt valve*

